

ADAM AND THE ANIMALS: ALLEGORY AND THE LITERAL SENSE IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

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The purpose of this paper is to analyze the iconography of Adam Naming the Animals in Early Christian art in the light of contemporary exegetical literature. The first section of the article distinguishes between Early Christian commentaries on the Earthly Paradise according to their levels of interpretation, whether literal, allegorical, or both in combination. The second section of the article makes use of these distinctions to present interpretations of several well-known portrayals of Adam in Paradise: the Cotton Genesis iconography as seen in the mosaic of S. Marco in Venice, the ivory diptych from the Carrand Collection in Florence, and the floor mosaics of Adam that have been excavated in Syria. Finally, the article suggests some means by which Early Christian artists could suggest different levels of allegorical interpretation when they created visual texts.

The Earthly Paradise is described in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 2:8–14), immediately after the account of Creation. Like the Creation itself, the Earthly Paradise was given both literal and allegorical interpretations by patristic writers. Origen, in his third-century commentaries on Genesis, allegorized Adam in Paradise as the baptized in the church and claimed that the trees of Paradise do not have a physical existence: “Whenever in our reading we rise from the myths and the literal interpretation, we ask what are those trees that God cultivates [in Eden]. We say that there are no trees in that place which can be perceived by the senses.”¹ Moreover, Origen was accused by his critics of taking St. Paul’s vision of the man caught up into Paradise and of using it to show that the Earthly Paradise was to be allegorized as heaven.

St. Paul had written (2 Cor. 12:2–4): “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” Because of Origen’s use of this passage to link the Earthly Paradise with the “third heaven,” St. Paul’s vision played a large part in subsequent discussions of the Earthly Paradise, whether their authors took a literal or an allegorical perspective. Thus Epiphanius, the fourth-century bishop of Salamis, vehemently denied Origen’s interpretation and gave an absolutely literal reading of the text in Genesis. “Who may listen to Origen,” says Epiphanius, “when he gives us Paradise in the third heaven, when he transfers what Scripture records from earth to heaven, and when he understands all the trees that are described in Genesis in such an allegorical fashion that to be sure trees are angelic powers, even though the truth does not accept this?”² The bishop of Salamis argues that the Earthly Paradise is to be understood literally, just as the other aspects of earthly Creation are to be taken literally, because we can experience them with our own senses. The Rivers of Paradise are real rivers, which we can see and drink from when they reach the inhabited earth; so also the fruit trees of Paradise are real fruit trees, similar to other earthly trees.³

Another writer who accepted a literal interpre-

¹*Selecta in Genesim*, PG 12, cols. 98–100.

²*Epistola ad Joannem Episcopum Jerosolymorum*, PG 43, col. 386.

³*Ibid.*; see also *Ancoratus*, 55; PG 43, col. 113.

tation of Paradise was Acacius, the disciple of Eusebius who succeeded him to the see of Caesarea in the year 340. He speaks of a sensible garden, with real, perceptible trees: "One should not wonder if immortality and the knowledge of good and evil came to men through trees that could be perceived by the senses, since the remission of sins also is given through water that can be perceived by the senses, and perceptible bread and wine sanctify those that partake of them."⁴

Among those who allegorized the Earthly Paradise, the most important was Ambrose, whose commentary *De Paradiso* played an important role in transmitting to the West the ideas of eastern writers such as Origen.⁵ At the outset of his commentary Ambrose quotes the Pauline text on the third heaven.⁶ Later on, in a complex passage, he argues that God gave man, through Adam, dominion over the animals, which means the power to discriminate and to form judgments about things. But, for his disobedience, man was cast out of Paradise. However, he retains a "memory" of Paradise, and "by the ascent of virtue" the just man can be "caught up into Paradise" again, like St. Paul, in order that he may be able to judge between all things. "Every man," says Ambrose, "is first corporeal; secondly, he is of a sensual nature; and thirdly, he is spiritual in that you are caught up to the third heaven to see the brilliance of spiritual grace; for 'the sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the spirit' (1 Cor. 2:14), and for that reason the ascent into the third heaven is necessary for you in order that you may be caught up into Paradise. Thenceforth you will be caught up without danger, so that you may be able to judge between all things, because 'the spiritual man judges between all things and he himself is judged by no man' (1 Cor. 2:15)."⁷ Thus, for Ambrose, Adam's dominion over the animals in the Earthly Paradise is a type of the just man who has ascended from his corporeal nature to a spiritual Paradise.

Another writer who related Adam's original command over the beasts to the powers of the virtuous man was the Antiochene theologian Theodoret of Cyrus. Theodoret composed a series of answers to *Questions on Genesis* which he produced at

the request of Hypatios after 453. In response to the query "For what purpose did God create beasts and reptiles?" Theodoret wrote that just as we use punishments such as rods and lashes in bringing up children, to discipline them, so God, when he saw us inclined to sloth, created beasts and reptiles like lashes and punishments to frighten us and to induce us to implore him for his aid. But just as children who have grown up scorn such punishments, so "those who are educated in virtue do not fear the attacks of wild beasts, inasmuch as the beasts stood beside Adam before he sinned and offered their submission. And again, when Noah entered the ark, the lion, the leopard, and the most dangerous reptiles followed him like sheep. And the lions stood by Daniel, and even though they were hungry did not dare to approach him. . . . In like manner the viper, which fastened its teeth on the hand of the apostle [St. Paul], when it found no weakness or softness of sin in him, immediately leaped off and threw itself down into the fire."⁸ Therefore, for Theodoret of Cyrus, St. Paul's immunity to the venom of the viper at Malta was due to his freedom from sin, a state that he shared with Adam before the Fall.

Several Early Christian writers took the best of both worlds by accepting Paradise in both its literal and its spiritual sense. This position was expressed succinctly in a sermon on Paradise spuriously attributed to Basil the Great: "On the one hand we understand Paradise in a corporeal sense, but on the other hand we allegorize it in a spiritual sense."⁹ Augustine, in his commentary on Genesis, distinguishes with characteristic clarity between three different approaches to the biblical account of Paradise: "I am not unaware that many have said many things on the subject of Paradise. However, there are three nearly general opinions concerning this matter. One is the opinion of those who want Paradise to be understood only corporeally. Another is the opinion of those who understand Paradise only spiritually. The third is the opinion of those who accept Paradise in both senses, sometimes corporeally, but at other times spiritually." Then Augustine adds tersely: "To speak briefly, I own that the third opinion pleases me."¹⁰ Those such as Epiphanius who allowed the Earthly Paradise to be understood only in its literal sense were, in fact, relatively few in number. The

⁴R. Devreesse, "Anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque," *RBibl* 44 (1935), 166–91, esp. 186 f.

⁵R. R. Grimm, *Paradisus coelestis, paradisus terrestris* (Munich, 1977), 48 f.

⁶*De Paradiso*, 1, ed. C. Schenkl, CSEL 32 (Vienna, 1897), 265.

⁷*De Paradiso*, 52–53, ed. Schenkl, 308–10.

⁸*Quaestiones in Genesim*, I.18, PG 80, col. 97.

⁹*De Paradiso, Oratio III*, PG 30, col. 68.

¹⁰*De Genesi ad litteram*, VIII.1, PL 34, col. 371.

majority of writers either allegorized the Garden of Eden or accepted it in both its physical and its spiritual senses.

The three types of interpretation that we have distinguished in Early Christian writers, that is, the literal, the allegorical, and the two in combination, were also represented in works of art. I shall try to illustrate this correspondence with three different Early Christian images of Adam Naming the Animals in Paradise.¹¹

My first example corresponds to the literal interpretation of the Genesis text, and it will concern us only briefly. This is the thirteenth-century mosaic in a dome of the atrium of S. Marco in Venice (Fig. 1). As is well known, the Genesis mosaics in S. Marco are more or less close copies of the Early Christian miniatures contained, or once contained, in the Cotton Genesis.¹² In the mosaic the landscape of Paradise itself is indicated by plants and trees. We see God enthroned on the left, who instructs the naked Adam to give names to the animals, which are grouped on the right. Adam points to the creatures with his right hand in order to name them, and as he does so he lays his left hand on the head of a lion. This last gesture, which is not called for by the biblical text, is a sign that all of the beasts, even those with the fiercest grimaces, submit meekly to his authority. The memory of the tameness of the animals in Paradise was vivid in the early centuries of Christianity, and every now and then a remarkable creature would help to keep that memory alive. Such a beast was Jordan, the pet lion of Abbot Gerasimus, who lived in the fifth century. According to John Moschus, this beast became the good abbot's constant companion, while he fed it on bread and vegetables. Through this vegetarian lion, says John Moschus, God showed how the beasts were submitted to Adam before his disobedience and expulsion from Paradise.¹³ We can also note that Adam is standing in the S. Marco mosaic; this may remind us of such writers as Gregory of Nyssa, who said that Adam's

upright posture was a sign of his royal power over the beasts.¹⁴ But, apart from these small signs of Adam's dominion over Creation, there is little in the mosaic to guide the viewer explicitly to an allegorical interpretation of the scene.

The best known Early Christian illustration of Adam in Paradise is the diptych from the Carrand Collection in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence (Fig. 2).¹⁵ This ivory is a good example of the third type of interpretation listed by Augustine, that which accepts both allegory and the literal sense. A recent paper by Ellen Konowitz has explored some of the complex intellectual links between the Naming of the Animals carved on the present left-hand panel of the diptych and the scenes of St. Paul which appear on the right leaf. Konowitz has stressed that "the Carrand ivory presents a parallel between Adam's dominion over the animals through reason and Paul's dominion over the serpent through faith."¹⁶ Here I shall consider how the images on the diptych also relate to Early Christian views on the allegorization of Paradise.

At the top of the left-hand leaf we see Adam, completely naked, sitting in a landscape containing trees, of which some bear fruit. At the bottom of the panel four Rivers of Paradise flow from their source in Eden. Adam sits with his left hand grasping the trunk of a fruit tree; with his right hand he makes a gesture that can be interpreted in two senses. In the first place, he is pointing downward as if to discriminate between the animals gathered around him. And, in the second place, his gesture could be taken as a sign of speech, since the first two fingers of his hand (the index and middle fingers) are extended, while the little and ring fingers are folded down.¹⁷ It is as if Adam were actually

¹⁴ *De hominis opificio*, 8, PG 44, col. 144.

¹¹ For general discussions of the iconography of Adam Naming the Animals, see M. T. d'Alverny, "L'homme comme symbole. Le microcosme," *Simboli e simbologia nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 23 (Spoleto, 1976), 123–95; X. Muratova, "L'iconografia medievale e l'«ambiente» storico," *Storia dell'arte* 28 (1976), 171–79; idem, "Adam donne leurs noms aux animaux," *SM* 18.2 (1977), 367–94.

¹² K. Weitzmann, "The Genesis Mosaics of San Marco and the Cotton Genesis Miniatures," in O. Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice*, II (Chicago, 1984), 105–42, esp. 113; Muratova, "Iconografia," 172; idem, "Adam," 368.

¹³ *Pratum spirituale*, 107, PG 87.3, cols. 2968–69.

¹⁵ The place and date of manufacture of the diptych are uncertain. It has been attributed to the West, especially to Italy, and also to Constantinople. Its refined, classicizing style suggests that it should be dated to the end of the 4th century or to the first quarter of the 5th century. See W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, 3rd ed. (Mainz, 1976), 78, no. 108, pl. 58; H. L. Kessler, "Scenes from the Acts of the Apostles on Some Early Christian Ivories," *Gesta* 18 (1979), 109–19; K. Weitzmann, ed., *The Age of Spirituality, Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century* (New York, 1979), 505–7; K. J. Shelton, "The Diptych of the Young Office Holder," *JbAC* 25 (1982), 132–71, esp. 167–70.

¹⁶ "The Program of the Carrand Diptych," *ArtB* 66 (1984), 484–88, esp. 488. See also H. Schade, "Die Tiere in der mittelalterlichen Kunst. Untersuchungen zur Symbolik von zwei Elfenbeinreliefs," *Studium generale* 20 (1967), 220–35, esp. 233 ff.

¹⁷ R. Delbrueck, "Zwei christliche Elfenbeine des 5. Jahrhunderts," *Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie*, I.1, *Spätantike und Byzanz* (Baden-Baden, 1952), 167–88, esp. 178. On the gesture in other contexts, see H. P. L'Orange, *Stud-*

naming the animals and pointing them out at the same time. Among the creatures that cluster around Adam, we should note that the serpent is not yet crawling upon its belly, the motion to which it was condemned after the Fall, but it raises itself off the ground in a great arc. Several of the animals approach Adam with open mouths. None of these beasts should be considered aggressive, because all writers agreed that the animals were at peace before Adam's original sin; even the present carnivores ate fruit and plants. "The beasts, for their part, did not tear apart prey, for they were not carnivorous. The vulture now is accustomed to feeding itself on corpses, but given that [in Paradise] there were as yet no corpses, there was not yet any stench, nor yet any such diet for vultures. But all followed the regimen of swans, and all fed off grass in the fields." So we read in a homily on the origin of Man, which was probably composed by Basil the Great as a sequel to his nine sermons on the *Hexaëmeron*.¹⁸ Not only did the animals in Paradise not eat meat, but they were all completely tame. "When [Adam] saw the beasts next to him, he did not jump away," says John Chrysostom in one of his sermons on Genesis, "but he gave names to them, like some master to the servants set under him."¹⁹ Theodoret of Cyrus says that before Adam sinned the beasts "stood beside" him and "offered their submission."²⁰ The submission of the beasts may be signified by the curious pose of several of the animals on the ivory, which stand before Adam raising a front hoof or a paw. As for the beasts which the carver has represented with open jaws, a passage from the sermon on Paradise spuriously attributed to Basil suggests that these animals should be seen as giving utterance in a wholly peaceful manner: "Along with birds, there was the spectacle of all kinds of terrestrial animals, all tame, all habitually both listening and speaking to one another in an easily intelligible fashion. Then the serpent created no horror, but it was mild and gentle."²¹

Thus the present left leaf of the Carrand diptych appears to give us the literal sense of the

Earthly Paradise. Adam reclines in a landscape furnished with the fruit trees and with the Four Rivers described in Genesis; he extends his right hand as if to name the creatures, and they in their turn gather submissively around him. Yet this literal view of the Earthly Paradise was also intended to be taken as an allegory. The principal clues to its spiritual meaning are to be found in the subjects carved on the opposing leaf of the diptych, which complement and interpret the paradisaic image when viewed from the perspective of allegorizing writers of the Early Christian period.

At the top of the right panel we see a bald-headed St. Paul sitting between two men;²² it is hard to identify this scene with a precise episode in the apostle's recorded life, but he appears to be speaking, with his left hand holding a scroll and his right hand raised in an attitude of address.²³ The gesture made by Paul's right hand, with the first two fingers extended and the other two bent, is similar to that made by Adam, except that Adam points his hand down toward the animals, while the apostle raises his fingers to address his audience. In front of St. Paul stands a man holding a book, while behind the chair there is another man holding a scroll and leaning toward the apostle in an attitude which suggests that he is listening intently to his words. In the center of the panel the carver set the miracle of St. Paul and the viper on the island of Malta. Paul stands on the left of the scene, beside a small fire; the snake which came out of the heat has fastened onto his hand, while the chief magistrate of the island, Publius, and a bearded companion raise their palms to show their amazement that no harm has come to the saint. Another Maltese, a young man, appears in the background. Below, on a smaller scale, we see subsidiary scenes which are connected with the central episode of St. Paul and the viper and which are tied to it by means of the identities of the participants and by their gestures. On the right is the bearded companion of Publius whom we saw above; he leads a man with a paralyzed arm to be healed by the apostle, whom the islanders said was a god after the miracle of the viper. The bearded guide points St. Paul out to the sick man. On the

ies on the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World (Oslo, 1953), 172–97.

¹⁸In *Scripturae verba*, "Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram," *Oratio II*, 6, ed. A. Smets and M. Van Esbroeck, *Basile de Césarée, Sur l'origine de l'homme*, SC 160 (Paris, 1970), 242. On the authorship, see *ibid.*, 13 ff.

¹⁹In *Genesim*, *Homilia IX*, PG 53, col. 79.

²⁰*Quaestiones in Genesim*, I.18, PG 80, col. 97. On the tameness of the wild creatures before Adam's sin, see also Theophilus of Antioch, *Ad Autolycum*, ed. R. M. Grant (Oxford, 1970), 54.

²¹*De Paradiso*, *Oratio III*, PG 30, col. 68.

²²On this portrait of Paul, see H. P. L'Orange, "Plotinus-Paul," *Byz* 25–27 (1955–57), 473–85, esp. 485.

²³On the identification and import of the Pauline scenes, see the discussions by Kessler, "Scenes," 113 ff and, most recently, by K. J. Shelton, "Paul in Court, Paul at Court," *College Art Association of America, 72nd Annual Meeting, Abstracts* (Toronto, 1984), 10 (published as "Roman Aristocrats, Christian Commissions: The Carrand Diptych," *JbAC* 29 [1986]).

left, the other companion of Publius, the younger man, brings to Paul an emaciated individual who is suffering from a wasting disease.

There is a striking contrast between the two halves of this diptych; the one panel shows us Adam reclining languorous and naked amid the fawning animals, while the other shows the miracles and authority of a venerable apostle. The juxtaposition of the two leaves has been termed by one recent writer an "opposition brutale."²⁴ It is, indeed, hard to explain this opposition of Adam and the apostle, unless we recall the allegorical treatments of Paradise. Ambrose of Milan, for example, said that Adam's original dominion over the animals means that man has the power to form judgments about things, but for his disobedience Adam was expelled from Paradise. However, the just man, such as St. Paul, can ascend to the third heaven and thus be caught up into a spiritual Paradise where he may judge between all things. It is possible that ideas of this kind lie behind the juxtaposition of the seated figures of Adam and of St. Paul, with their respective gestures of speech, at the tops of the two halves of the diptych; Adam discriminates between the animals, while St. Paul, as quoted by Ambrose, is the "spiritual man" who "judges between all things and he himself is judged by no man"—that is, not even by the Roman chief magistrate.

The two leaves of the diptych also associate Adam and St. Paul with respect to their serpents; we found precisely this juxtaposition in the exegesis of Theodoret of Cyrus: "Those who are educated in virtue do not fear the attacks of wild beasts, inasmuch as the beasts stood beside Adam before he sinned and offered their submission. . . . In like manner the viper, which fastened its teeth on the hand of the apostle, when it found no weakness or softness of sin in him, immediately leaped off and threw itself down into the fire."

The Pauline scenes on the right-hand panel of the Carrand diptych, therefore, amplify the sense of the paradisaical scene on the left panel. If the image of Adam surrounded by animals in Paradise had appeared on its own, there would be little reason to read it in more than its literal sense. But since it appears juxtaposed with the Apostle Paul, there is a strong likelihood that the artist also intended his viewers to be mindful of the third heaven and to read the Earthly Paradise in a spir-

itual as well as in a literal sense. The Carrand diptych thus corresponds to the viewpoint of those writers such as "Basil" and Augustine who accepted the Earthly Paradise in two senses, both corporeal and spiritual. While the left-hand panel leads us only to the literal reading of Paradise, reference to the right-hand panel reminds us of its allegorical meanings. We also see some of the rationale behind the artist's selection and adaptation of the particular episodes from St. Paul's life that were shown on the Carrand ivory. The chosen scenes were not merely intended to serve as illustrations of the narrative in the Book of Acts, but they functioned as a visual commentary on the associated image of Adam.

From the Carrand diptych, which conveys both the literal and the allegorical meanings of the Naming of the Animals in Paradise, we pass on to works of art that correspond to the second of Augustine's categories, the purely spiritual interpretation. Here our examples are floor mosaics that have been discovered in Syria. The best preserved is a pavement found in the nave of a church at Huarte, a site some fifteen kilometers north of Apamea, and dated by inscriptions to the years 472 or 487 (Fig. 3).²⁵ Although this mosaic is incomplete (only about a quarter of the original field is preserved at its eastern end), enough remains for a firm identification of the subject. In the place of honor, on the central axis of the floor and nearest to the sanctuary, we see a large figure of Adam, who is identified by an inscription above his head. He is sitting facing us on a backless throne; in his left hand he holds an open book, while he extends the fingers of his right hand as if in a gesture of speech. Unlike the Adam of the mosaic in Venice and the ivory in Florence, the Adam of the Huarte mosaic is fully clothed. He is flanked by two cypress trees, around each of which coils a serpent, whose head curves toward him. Adam is surrounded by a wide variety of birds and beasts, which are set amid the trees and flowering plants in the remaining field of the mosaic. Among the creatures that have survived, we can recognize, on the left of Adam, a winged griffon, a lion, a wading bird, a falcon, a lioness or a leopard, a jackal, a

²⁴D. Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Age* (Fribourg, 1978), 22.

²⁵M. T. and P. Canivet, "La mosaïque d'Adam dans l'église syrienne de Hūarte (Ve s.)," *CahArch* 24 (1975), 49–70; J. Balty, *Mosaïques antiques de Syrie* (Brussels, 1977), 128; M. T. and P. Canivet, "I complessi cristiani del 4 e del 5 secolo a Huarte (Siria settentrionale)," *RACr* 56 (1980), 146–72; idem, "Recherches en Apamène: Huarte (IV–VIe s.)," *Damascener Mitteilungen* 1 (1983), 21–29; J. Balty, "Les mosaïques de Syrie au Ve siècle et leur répertoire," *Byz* 54 (1984), 437–68, esp. 465.

bear, and a mongoose. On the other side of Adam we see a rayed phoenix standing to the right of the cypress tree, an eagle standing beside the throne, and several smaller birds. Most of the animals to the left of Adam had a reputation for ferocity, particularly the griffon which, according to George of Pisidia, could seize up an ox with its claws.²⁶ But here these beasts approach Adam peacefully; even the mongoose is not attacking its traditional enemy the serpent. The animals' tame demeanor indicates that the setting is the Earthly Paradise and that the time is before the Fall.²⁷

There are two other mosaics from Syria that relate to the floor at Huarte but that are even more fragmentary. Both have been removed from their original contexts: one is now in the National Museum at Copenhagen (Fig. 4); the other, which is somewhat similar, is in the museum at Hama. Like the Huarte mosaic, the fragment in Copenhagen also probably dates to the fifth century.²⁸ It shows a man, identified by an inscription above his head as Adam, sitting in a frontal position on a backless throne, with his feet on a footstool, and flanked once again by two cypress trees. Unlike the Adam of the Huarte floor, the seated figure in the Copenhagen mosaic has a nimbus around his head. He does not hold a book, but he does raise his right hand in a gesture of speech, with three fingers extended and the thumb and the ring finger folded to join each other. Like the Adam at Huarte, he is fully clothed, in robes of white shaded with yellow and gray. On his right there are the remains of a fruit tree, and also the head and neck of a crested bird, which was probably a peacock.²⁹ Although so little remains from the mosaic, the similarities with the Huarte floor are sufficiently close to allow us to suppose that the original pavement also showed Adam in the Earthly Paradise, surrounded by fruit-bearing trees, by birds, and presumably also by beasts.

²⁶ *Hexaëmeron*, lines 933–35, PG 92, col. 1505. On the mongoose, see J. Balty, "Le cobra et la mangouste dans les mosaïques tardives du Proche-Orient," *JÖB* 25 (1976), 223–33, esp. 229, and fig. 9.

²⁷ Canivet, "La mosaïque d'Adam," 61. By contrast, in the mosaics of the south aisle of the church the animals pursue and attack each other; the combatants include a mongoose and a serpent, and a griffon and an ox (zebu). See Balty, *Mosaïques antiques de Syrie*, 128 and idem, "Les mosaïques de Syrie," pl. xvi, fig. 1.

²⁸ S. Trolle, "Hellig Adam i Paradis," *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark* (Copenhagen, 1971), 105–12; Canivet, "La mosaïque d'Adam," 56 f.

²⁹ Trolle, "Hellig Adam i Paradis," 108. However, the Canivets, "La mosaïque d'Adam," 57, identify the bird as an egret.

The third mosaic, now in the Hama museum, was rescued by the Syrian police from an illegal excavation and is in an even less complete state.³⁰ All that survives is the figure of Adam himself, also identified by an inscription, sitting on a throne and making a gesture of speech with his right hand. Once again, Adam is clothed. However, his portrait was excised from the rest of the mosaic in such a way that there is no evidence for his original context; we cannot tell whether or not this Adam formed part of a portrayal of Paradise.

We have seen that the mosaic at Huarte appears to portray the Earthly Paradise before Adam's original sin, because the animals are shown at peace, both with Adam and with each other. But, if this identification of the subject is correct, there is one striking anachronism: Adam is not naked, as the biblical account requires, but fully clothed. This is a certain clue that the designer of the mosaic did not intend us to read the story in its literal sense, for a fully clothed Adam, enthroned and reading from a book, is no part of the account in Genesis. This Earthly Paradise can only be understood in the spiritual sense as allegory.

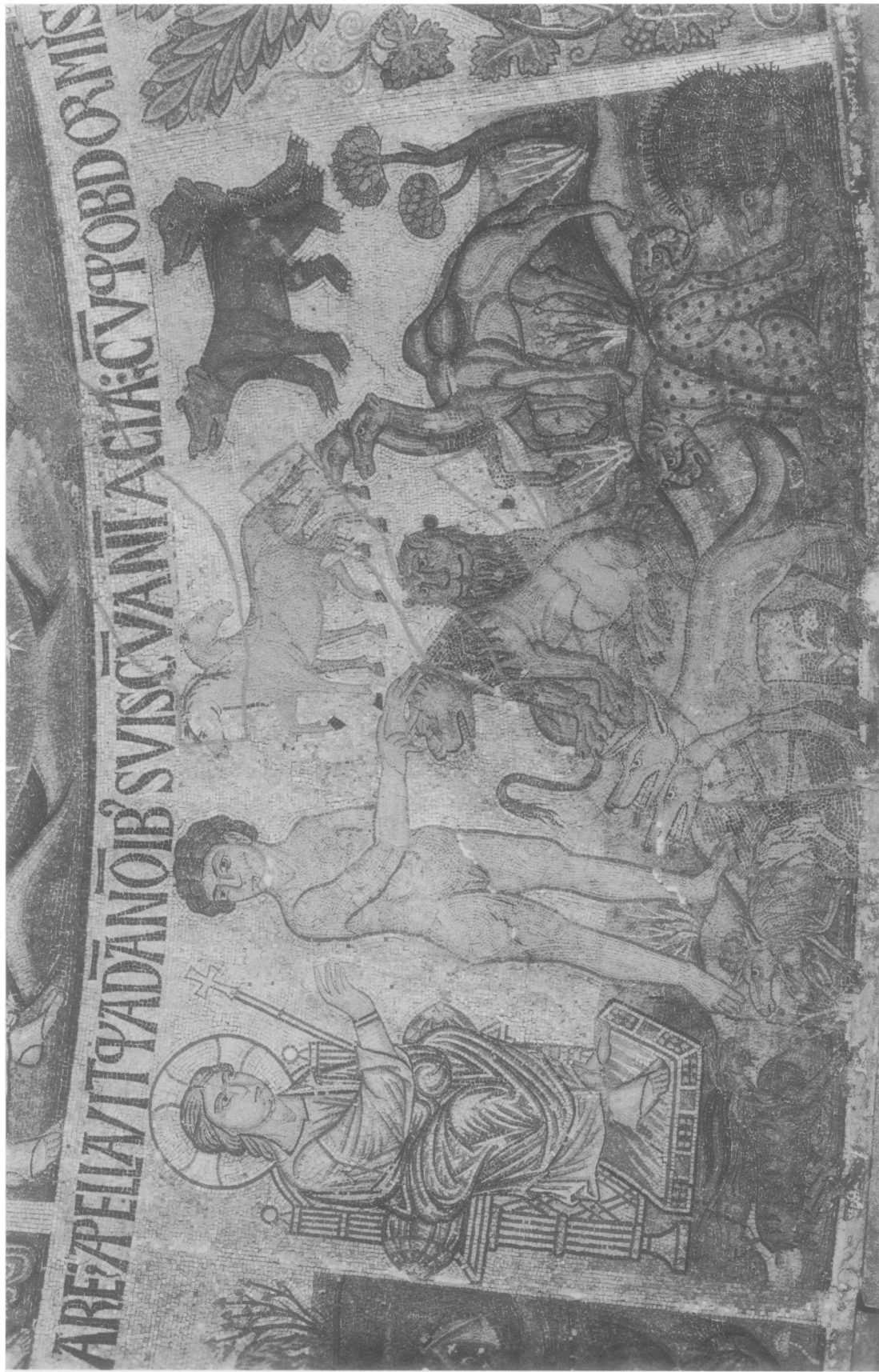
As often in the interpretation of Early Christian art, it is easier to detect the intent to allegorize than it is to define the precise nature of the allegory or allegories intended. Maria Teresa and Pierre Canivet have listed some of the possible symbolic connotations of Adam at this period. For example, in patristic writing the name of Adam often signified the earth and all of humanity, while the four letters of his name were identified with the initial letters of the four cardinal directions (*Anatolē, Dysis, Arktos, Mesēmbria*).³¹ But this symbolism does not require Adam to be clothed. Another interpretation that has been proposed for the Adam of the Syrian mosaics is that he represents Adam as ruler of Creation, sitting clothed upon a throne and surrounded by plants and animals.³² The theme of Adam's kingship over the world is frequently encountered in Early Christian literature, including Syriac sources.³³ We shall see that this is certainly

³⁰ Canivet, "La mosaïque d'Adam," 57, fig. 9.

³¹ Ibid., 61 and note 48.

³² See especially d'Alverny, "L'homme comme symbole" (above, note 11), 143 f.

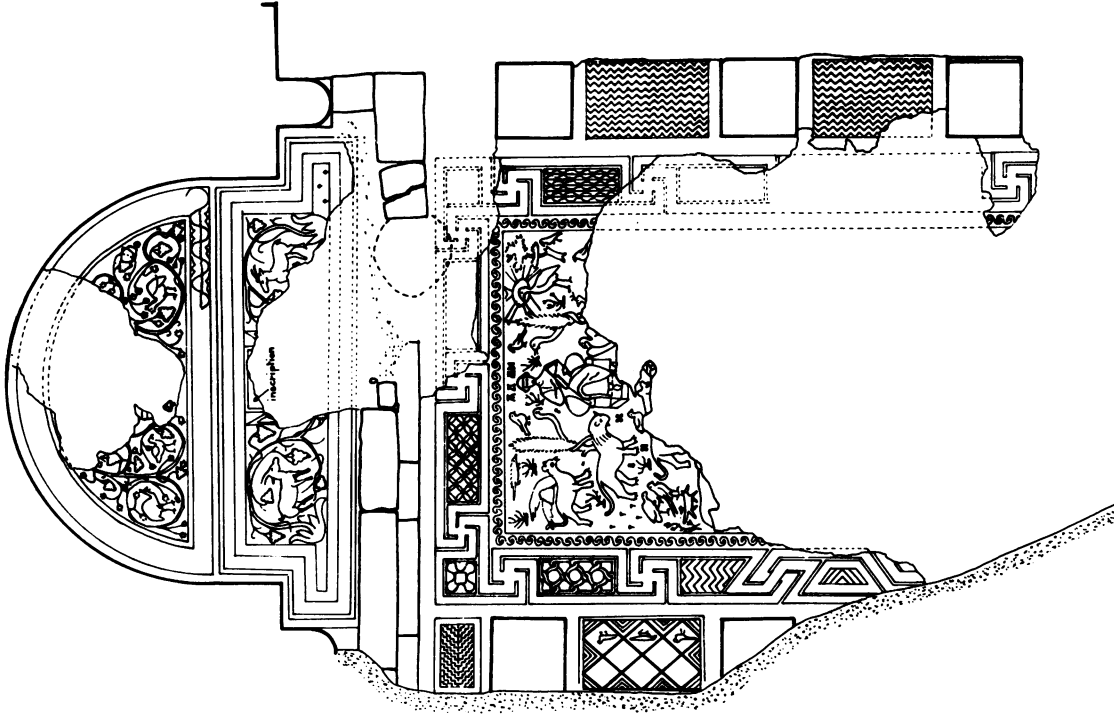
³³ See, for example, the passage from Gregory of Nyssa cited above in note 14. Among the Syriac texts may be noted the *Homilies on the Creation* by Narsai, which speak of Adam dominating all existence like a king; *Homilia I*, lines 125 f, ed. P. Gignoux, *Homélies de Narsai sur la Création*, PO 34 (Paris, 1968), 535. The Hexameron of Jacob of Sarug also speaks of Adam as the sovereign of nature, the new master consecrated to take possession of the entire world, who has "on his head his hair as a



1. Adam Naming the Animals, dome mosaic, S. Marco, Venice (photo: Dumbarton Oaks)



2. Carrand Diptych, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence
(photo: Hirmer Fotoarchiv)



3. Huarte, North Church, floor mosaics of apse and nave
(after M. T. and P. Canivet, "La Mosaïque d'Adam dans
l'église syrienne de Huarte (Ve S.)," *Cahiers archéologiques* 24
[1975], pp. 49–70, fig. 3)



4. Adam in Paradise, floor mosaic, National Museum,
Copenhagen

an aspect of the mosaics' content, but it is only a facet of a larger meaning. It may be noted that in the three mosaics there is little in Adam's costume to suggest royal status, nor does he carry any recognizable regalia, such as a crown, a scepter, or an orb.³⁴ On the contrary, in the Huarte floor he is holding an open book, which is the attribute of a wise man or a teacher rather than a ruler.

Another possible way of interpreting the Adam of the Syrian mosaics, which relates to the notion of Adam's dominion, is to see the clothed and enthroned figure as an illustration of the well-known passages in St. Paul's epistles that associate Adam with Christ, the new Adam.³⁵ In Rom. 5:14 Paul described Adam as "the figure of him that was to come," while in 1 Cor. 15:22 he wrote: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The Canivets have pointed out that the iconographic type of Adam in the Huarte mosaic matches certain portrayals of Christ, especially in that he is enthroned, he holds a book in his left hand, and his right hand is raised in a gesture of speech or benediction.³⁶ However, Adam's pose and dress are also appropriate for any Christian teacher. We may compare, for example, the Adam of the Huarte mosaic with the seated St. Paul of the Carrand diptych (Fig. 2), in that he holds his text in his left hand and makes a sign of speech with his right. It will be remembered that Theodoret of Cyrus, a Syrian bishop not far removed in time and in place from the Huarte mosaic, said that those who are "educated in virtue" and who receive the submission of wild beasts include Adam, Noah, Daniel, and St. Paul. I would propose, therefore, that the particular attributes of Adam in the Huarte mosaic were intended to convey the notion of his wisdom and glory, which be-

fore the Fall saved him from the attacks of wild beasts and which were eventually to be restored to him by Christ. There is an anonymous Early Byzantine hymn, perhaps of the fifth century, which corresponds in significant details to the iconography of the Syrian mosaics, for it speaks of the meaning of both the throne and the clothing of Adam. The hymn gives the words of Adam's lament after his expulsion from Paradise: "I am polluted, I am ruined, of my slaves I am a slave; for the wild beasts and reptiles that I mastered by fear fill me with terror. . . . How have I fallen? Where have I come? From a pedestal (*bēma*) to the ground, from divine wisdom to wretched physical existence. . . . And now Satan rejoices that he has stripped me of my glory; but he shall have no joy in this, for see, my God will clothe me. . . . The *raiment* is a sign of the state that is to come; for He who has just clothed me shall in a little time carry me and save me."³⁷ A hymn by the Syriac writer Ephrem goes so far as to equate the white robes of those baptized in the Church with the robes of glory lost by Adam and Eve in Paradise: "[God] planted the beautiful garden, he built the holy Church. The assembly of saints is the image of Paradise. There one can gather each day the fruit which gives life to all. There is not one naked person among them: glory clothes them again. None here is only covered by leaves, or standing in an attitude of shame. Our Lord himself has caused them to find the tunic of Adam again. While the Church purifies its ears of this serpent's words, which [men] heard, and which sullied them, behold, those who had lost their own vestments are [clothed] anew in white."³⁸ In the light of these texts, we may interpret the Adam at Huarte as an image of one who has recovered through Christ the state of divine wisdom and glory in which beasts and serpents cannot hurt him.

In conclusion, we may return to the three types of meaning listed by Augustine and consider the artistic forms associated with each of them. The

crown"; T. Jansma, "L'Hexaméron de Jacques de Sarug," *OS* 4 (1959), 32–34.

³⁴Gregory of Nyssa tells us how we should expect to see Adam dressed, if an artist of his time had intended Adam's costume to be that of an earthly king: "Instead of the purple robe [the nature of man] was arrayed in virtue . . . instead of the scepter he leaned upon the bliss of immortality, instead of the royal diadem he was adorned with the crown of righteousness. . . ." *De hominis opificio*, 4, PG 44, col. 136. D'Alverny, "L'homme comme symbole," 145, points out that a drawing in the Millstadt Genesis shows Adam beneath two crowns; however, one cannot read the intentions of the 13th-century artist back into the Early Christian period.

³⁵Canivet, "La mosaïque d'Adam," 62 ff; idem, "I complessi cristiani," 161; Muratova, "Iconografia," 174 f. A discussion of the typology of Adam is found in J. Daniélou, *Sacramentum futuri. Etudes sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris, 1950), 3–52.

³⁶"La mosaïque d'Adam," 58 and note 37.

³⁷*Frühbyzantinische Kirchenpoesie*, ed. P. Maas (Berlin, 1931), 16–20, no. 2; trans. C. A. Trypanis, *The Penguin Book of Greek Verse* (Harmondsworth, 1971), 367–70, no. 211.

³⁸*Hymni de Paradiso*, VI.7–9; trans. after R. Lavenant, ed., *Ephrem de Nisibe: Hymnes sur le Paradis*, SC 137 (Paris, 1968), 84–85; see also J. Daniélou, "Terre et Paradis chez les Pères de l'Eglise," *EJ* 22 (1953), 464–65. On the popularity of clothing imagery as an expression of salvation in Syriac literature, see S. Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition," in M. Schmidt, ed., *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter*, *Eichstätter Beiträge* 4 (Eichstatt, 1982), 11–40.

literal interpretation corresponds to works of art such as the mosaic in S. Marco, which presents a single uncombined image with no pointers to an allegorical reading. The double interpretation is represented by the Carrand diptych; here the two juxtaposed images allow literal readings but also suggest an allegorical content when they are combined. Finally, an allegorical interpretation that excludes a purely literal reading is presented by the Syrian mosaics, in which, as it were, the two halves of the Carrand diptych are fused into one image. These three methods of creating literal and allegorical meanings, the uncombined image, juxtaposed images, and fused images, were applied to other subjects in Early Christian art, such as the

Prophet Daniel in the Lions' Den; but to explore these would be beyond the scope of the present paper.³⁹

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³⁹The iconography of Daniel has been explored in an important study by J. W. Salomonson, *Voluptatem spectandi non perdat sed mutet. Observations sur l'iconographie du martyre en Afrique romaine* (Amsterdam, 1979). Among other examples, he discusses a wooden comb from Achmim, which opposes on its two sides images of Daniel and of Thecla between lions, thus displaying the prophet as a prototype of Christian martyrdom, and a North African pottery plate which presents Daniel in the naked guise of an athlete in the arena, so that, in effect, the images of Daniel and of a martyr are fused into one; *ibid.*, 56, 74 f, 82–88, figs. 45 and 59.